



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Character of God” Series Lesson 6 – September 4, 2016

Incommunicable Attribute of Omnipresence

I. **Lesson Starters:**

Last week we looked at the Incommunicable attribute of Eternity. God has no beginning, end or succession of moments in his own being and sees all time equally. Today we will look at Omnipresence. Just like God is unlimited or infinite with respect to time, so God is unlimited with respect to space. God’s omnipresence can be defined as follows:

God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with this whole being

God is Lord of all space and cannot be limited by space is evident first from the fact that he created all. The creation of the material world implies the creation of space as well.

II. **God is Present Everywhere:**

Jeremiah 23:23-24

23 “Am I God at hand, says the Lord and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth?”

God’s omnipresence is beautifully expressed by David:

Psalms 139:7-10

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

- God is rebuking the prophets that think their thoughts and words are hidden from God
- God is everywhere and fills the heaven and earth; there is nowhere that someone can escape God’s presence

III. **God Does Not have Spatial Dimensions**

1 Kings 8:27

27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you.

- While God’s whole being is present in every part of space, it is also necessary to say that God cannot be contained by any space, not matter how large
- We should avoid trying to think of God as extending infinitely in all directions or bigger than our surrounding space; This is incorrect since it continues to think of God’s being in spatial terms
- Try not to think of God in terms of size or spatial dimensions
- God is a being that exists without size or dimensions in space

We cannot begin to think of God himself as equivalent to any part of creation or space.

IV. **God Can Be Present to Punish, to Sustain or to Bless?**

Some may wonder how can God be present in “all places, such as hell”? Isn’t this the opposite or absence of God? We have to realize that God is present in different ways in different places or God acts differently in different places in his creation. Sometimes God is present to punish:

Amos 9:1-4

1 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said: "Strike the tops of the pillars so that the thresholds shake. Bring them down on the heads of all the people; those who are left I will kill with the sword. Not one will get away, none will escape. 2 Though they dig down to the depths below, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens above, from there I will bring them down. 3 Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from my eyes at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. 4 Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. "I will keep my eye on them for harm and not for good."

Colossians 1:17

17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together

- At other times, God is present neither to punish or to bless, but present to sustain, or to keep the universe existing and functioning in the way he intended

Most of the time the bible speaks of God's presence, it is referring to a presence to bless.

An important consideration in God's presence has to deal with the unbeliever. In one sense we say that God's whole being is present at every point in space; so does this therefore correlate to also being present in all people at every point? Two difficulties arise with this comment:

1. The bible does not speak about God's presence in unbelievers in a direct way (Possibly so that God is not attributed to deeds of evil or one of blessing?)
2. "Present to sustain" for the unbeliever?

In summary, God is present in every part of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places. God's presence can be to bless, punish or sustain, all are biblical; yet it is mostly to bless.

V. Group Questions:

1. In thinking through what we discussed concerning "omnipresence", do you think it is misleading to say that God is "more present" in some places more than others?
2. Do you think that God is just as present in Hell as Heavens? Why or why not?
3. With respect to the question 2 above and using section IV of this lesson, can you better explain God's presence in heaven compared to other areas as defined by his purpose there? Why or Why not?
4. With God present in every part of space, what does this mean for an unbeliever?
5. Does God's presence in different places and people through different actions or means help explain believers versus unbelievers?